

House Committee on Banking & Financial Services
2/17/99 - Syracuse, N.Y.
Subcommittee on Housing & Community Opportunity

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I would like to thank Congressman Lazio and Congressman Walsh for the opportunity to speak today regarding our senior housing, the Villa Scalabrini, a 124 apartment facility, under the HUD 202 housing program for seniors and younger persons who are physically disabled.

I am a resident of the Villa Scalabrini and was its first Superintendent. Since the Villa first opened in mid-1980 I have seen many of the benefits of this housing and many of the changes taking place with my fellow residents and in our neighborhood.

At the outset residents seemed more appreciative of the housing and the socialization which occurred there. I think not so many of us were in need of personal or medical services.

Of late, I think otherwise as our new residents are not as ready to join our functions and perhaps are in need of more help from agencies. Even my older friends seem to need more support.

Peter White, Director of Christopher Community, tells me this committee is seeking to keep the HUD senior housing program alive and well, perhaps through funds made available under your guidance. In that regard we might well use some funds which would provide more roll-in showers, perhaps a community space for physical therapy, and a separate kitchen where meals might be prepared by an agency which could operate at the Villa for those who become home-bound. In other words, the addition of conveniences that would make it easier for all of us to get along better as we get older.

Our building seems to be in very good shape as the staff pays attention to cleaning and repairs. Congressman Walsh visits us and I believe he can attest to its attractiveness. Mr. White worries about funds for future repairs and the cost of improvements, so if your committee can increase the funds available for both repairs and improvements it would be appreciated.

Thank you for your attention.